



# OUR SHOES TRAINING



In partnership with



## Education



# Introduction

Surrey County Council's "Our Shoes" series is a collaborative initiative designed to foster a more inclusive and understanding educational environment.

By bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds with educators and support staff, Our Shoes empowers young voices by providing a platform for students to share their experiences and perspectives.

Our Shoes promotes empathy and understanding by enhancing educators' awareness of the challenges faced by young people, building a more inclusive culture by fostering a climate of respect, inclusivity, and collaboration within educational settings.

## About our training

In partnership with Surrey County Council, our award-winning "Our Shoes" training series is dedicated to promoting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within educational settings.

Our courses empower your team to develop a greater understanding of the perspectives and experiences of young people, enabling them to interact with students in a more empathetic and supportive manner.

By exploring situations from a child or young person's point of view, Our Shoes helps educators to build stronger relationships by developing a deeper understanding of students' emotions and needs. Helping to improve communication by enhancing your teams ability to connect with students effectively, and create a more inclusive environment by fostering a sense of belonging and respect.

Through interactive workshops and discussion, participants will gain valuable insights into the emotional challenges faced by young people. This increased understanding will equip your team with the tools to create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.





# POWERFUL AND EFFECTIVE COURSES



## A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL PEOPLE, TOGETHER

We have collaborated with young people over the last decade, to develop the courses that we offer today. Each young person has helped us to create courses that are powerful and effective.

In return we provide support and employment so that young people can move forward with their lives, experience the world of work, and find some benefit from their experience.

Employing, and paying a young person is a step towards a better future for them, and an opportunity for you to help the next young person that you work with.

A young man with dark hair, wearing a grey hoodie and a black harness, is seated in a wheelchair. He is smiling and looking towards a young woman with long blonde hair. The woman is holding an open book and looking at it with a smile. They are both in a brightly lit, indoor setting, possibly a library or a classroom. A large white circle is overlaid on the top right of the image, containing the text 'FOSTERING EMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING IN EDUCATION'.

**FOSTERING  
EMPATHY AND  
UNDERSTANDING  
IN EDUCATION**

# Is it for our education setting?

Today, the values of an education service are as important as the education that it provides.

As educators, you understand the profound impact you can have on the lives of children and young people. Our Shoes training is designed for professionals working in education to deepen their understanding of diverse perspectives and enhance their ability to interact effectively with students from all backgrounds.

By participating in this training, professionals will learn to foster an inclusive learning

environment by recognising and mitigating biases in their own thinking, communicating with students in a more empathetic and respectful manner, helping to build stronger relationships with students.

Whether you are a educator, administrator, or support staff, this training can help create a more positive and supportive environment for all students.



## HIGHLIGHTS

**A decade of collaboration:** Our Shoes is the culmination of ten years of working closely with young people. Their insights, experiences, and unique perspectives have shaped a programme that is tailored to the diverse needs of students at all levels.

**Deeper understanding:** At its core, Our Shoes empowers staff to see students from a different viewpoint, fostering empathy, understanding, and a more positive and effective learning environment.

**Promoting equity and inclusion:** Our Shoes training helps create an inclusive school culture where all students, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or ability, feel valued, respected, and safe.

**Empathy building exercises:** This training includes unique empathy-building exercises that encourage participants to deeply understand and appreciate the experiences and perspectives of others.



## BENEFITS

**Building strong relationships:** By emphasising relationship building with children and young people, Our Shoes training helps professionals create positive and supportive interactions.

**Using effective communication:** Professionals are trained to use respectful and supportive language, boosting students' confidence and engagement.

**Fostering respect and understanding:** The training promotes treating students with respect, helping them achieve their goals, and involving them in decision-making processes.

**Real experience to learn from:** Well-being is paramount to this training and all that SCC does. The experience that our training brings can be invaluable to support vulnerable young people.

# Our Perspective 1

A young person's perspective in a situation can be quite different depending on their life experiences. How a young person behaves in a situation can be determined by those experiences - which means that the more knowledge and understanding staff have, the better they can engage with young people in any situation.



Enhance understanding of how interactions can affect young people dealing with mental health challenges.



Develop skills to improve communication with young people from diverse backgrounds.



Listen to young people share their experiences and insights on everyday life.



## WHAT IS OUR SHOES - PERSPECTIVE?

Our Shoes - Perspective training is designed to guide educators and staff through a series of scenario based experiences that explore how young people, especially those with Additional Needs and Disabilities, anxiety, mental health challenges, or who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, perceive and navigate the world.



## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Understand:** Educators will gain a deeper understanding of what young people from diverse backgrounds or with specific needs may experience in various learning environments.

**Recognise:** Identify key challenges that young people face in their daily lives and how these challenges shape their perspectives in different situations.

**Labels and Stereotypes:** Explore the impact of being labelled or pre-judged as a young, vulnerable individual, and reflect on how this affects students' learning experiences and self-esteem.

# Our Perspective 2

Additional Needs and Disabilities are not always obvious. Even experienced staff can make assumptions without knowing the full story of the person they are engaging with. Our AND module helps equip staff to better understand, and to deal with young people in an empathetic manner, no matter what their situation might be.



Recognise how AND might affect a young person's understanding of what is being asked of them.



Gain knowledge to improve interactions with young people from all walks of life.



Hear from young people about their experience and see how such experiences create different perspectives on every day life.



## WHAT IS OUR SHOES - AND?

Our Shoes - AND training is a module that highlights the experiences of young adults with Additional Needs and Disabilities in various situations.

By participating in this module, educators will develop a deeper understanding of how to interact with young people in a respectful and supportive manner, fostering positive outcomes for both students and educators.



## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Empathise:** Gain a deeper understanding of how various situations can be particularly stressful for young people with Additional Needs and Disabilities.

**Reduce discrimination and bias:** Our Shoes training addresses unconscious bias, helping educators recognise and reduce biases in their interactions and decision-making processes.

**Adapt practice:** Learn strategies to better support young people with AND throughout their school day.

# Our Perspective 3

Our Shoes - LGBTQ+ training aims to highlight issues faced by young people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. This training gives staff who engage with young people, a better understanding of what it is like to be an LGBTQ+ young person, navigating life.



Improve understanding of the impact of words and actions, for a young person from the LGBTQ+ community.



Gain knowledge to improve practice during the working day.



Hear young people's perspective and experiences in a range of scenarios.



## WHAT IS OUR SHOES - LGBTQ+?

Our Shoes - LGBTQ+ is a training module that sheds light on the experiences of young people from the LGBTQ+ community, equipping educators with the knowledge and tools to better support and understand students who may have experienced, witnessed, or been involved in challenging situations.

This course also promotes a culture of tolerance and open-mindedness towards LGBTQ+ students, fostering a more inclusive and supportive school environment.



## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Language:** How language used can be perceived as hurtful and affect a young person's self-image and confidence.

**Understand:** Educators will gain insight into what it feels like for a young person to grow up in fear of judgment or discrimination.

**Recognise:** Identify the everyday challenges young people face, and understand how these experiences shape their ability to cope with situations, and view the world around them.

# Our Perspective 4

Our Shoes - Respect is a course that stands on its own or serves as a key complement to Our Shoes - Perspective. Our Shoes - Respect is dedicated to recognising the voices of young people, especially those with care-experience.



Improve practice to get better responses from young people.



Engage, Encourage and Empower young people in every interaction.



Include the voice of young people from all backgrounds, in all the work that you do.



## WHAT IS OUR SHOES - RESPECT?

Our Shoes - Respect training focuses on 'listening to young people and taking them seriously'.

Our Shoes - Respect has been developed in collaboration with looked-after young people and care leavers in Surrey to help professionals understand their experiences, and what it is like to access various services.

Attending Our Shoes - Respect will enhance delegates capability to listen, consult and respect the views of young people, and care leavers.



## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Language:** How language that we use can make young people feel uncomfortable, excluded, and anxious.

**Communication:** The importance of understanding that people can hear and interpret information differently, and not in the way intended.

**Emotion:** Understand frustration, vulnerability, and the feeling of helplessness, experienced by young people.

# Our Perspective 5

There are over 376,000 young adult carers in the UK. Over 50,000 young carers spend 50 hours or more a week on their caring role. Carers can be as young as 5 years old, and it can take up to 10 years before they are identified even though they will be present in every school, college, university and workplace across the country.



Improve understanding of what a young carer is and what it means to be someone who, sometimes from a very young age, is charged with caring for others including siblings and parents.



Gain an understanding of the pressures under which young carers live on a daily basis and how external intervention, even well meant, can add more for a young carer to deal with.



Hear directly about what it is like to be a young carer, what they have to do every day, how that affects them as a young person and why we all need to be more aware of and supportive of them.



## WHAT IS OUR SHOES - YOUNG CARERS?

Our Shoes – Young Carers training has been co-developed with young carers themselves to bring understanding to professionals about what it means to be a young carer. This training brings to life what it is like to be a carer as a young person, what they have to do, what mental and physical burdens and responsibilities they carry, and what effect it has on them. By completing this training, professionals will be better equipped to identify young carers, be more supportive and ultimately improve outcomes for them.



## LEARNING AND OUTCOMES

**Understand:** What it can be like for young carers in different situations and environments.

**Recognise:** Some of the key challenges that young carers face throughout their time as a carer.

**Adapt practice:** Listen to and understand young carers and change practice to help support them.



Our Shoes, has recently secured celebrity backing from care-experienced British Olympian Fatima Whitbread. Fatima said

“Well done on achieving a great concept for our young people.”



## Partnership

As well as delivering our own courses we can also support with development of programmes to ensure that educators, staff and the students they support, can benefit from the experience of our team.

Our team includes people from all walks of life and experience backgrounds. Our care-experienced staff and apprentices have been instrumental in developing our training content - which means that we offer a unique insight that your staff and students could benefit from.

We can tailor our services to your requirements providing consultancy, workshops, and a range of other services.

Surrey County Council will be delighted to partner on any project that supports care-experienced young people, and those with AND, emotional wellbeing, mental health or any other needs.

# How to Book

The Our Shoes training modules have been designed to stand alone so that you can enter the series at whatever point is best for your service.

However, in order to get a complete overview of all of the subjects and issues, we recommend completing the full series, ideally in the order outlined in this brochure.

Our highly experienced team is available to discuss your needs, and to help you to get exactly what you need. If you would like to tailor the training, or discuss anything in more detail, please contact us on the details below.

If you are ready to learn more about the Our Shoes series, please get in touch.

## Contact Us

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Follow us on social media to support and keep up to date with the work of children and young people accessing Surrey services.



**@ourvoicesurrey**





# OUR SHOES TRAINING

**RESPECTING STUDENTS,  
EMBRACING DIFFERENCE,  
EMPOWERING EDUCATORS**

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Surrey County Council

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